

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

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A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the  
old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers

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Whole No. 541

## Charles Pierce Burton: The Father of the Bob's Hill Boys

By Jack Bales



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 213

FIRESIDE SERIES

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Contents: See list elsewhere in this issue.

## Charles Pierce Burton: The Father of the Bob's Hill Boys

By Jack Bales

Like all DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP readers, I love boys' books, and I suppose I inherited this bibliophilic affection from my father. I remember coming across an Alger book in his study about fifteen years ago. I picked it up, read and enjoyed it, started collecting Algers and am now editor of the Alger Society magazine NEWSBOY, and proud possessor of a pretty fair collection of the author's works.

When I was ten Paw gave my twin brother and me a couple dozen Jerry Todd and Poppy Ott books by Leo Edwards, many in mint condition with dust jackets. My father was and is very fussy about his books—an admirable trait in my opinion. (Unfortunately, when we were twelve my brother threw away all the djs, though I still read and reread all these volumes.) I corresponded with Edwards' aficionado Bob Chenu for awhile, joined the Leo Edwards fan organization, and eventually amassed complete sets of these two series.

But my father's favorite author was Charles Pierce Burton, whose habit of incorporating historical events into all his books, gave Dad—now a history teacher—a love for the past. Significantly, Burton was a local author and a celebrity in our hometown of Aurora, Illinois. Boys all over the country read his "Bob's Hill" stories, published in brown covers by Henry Holt & Company of New York in the early 1900's, which told of the "doings of the Band" in Adams, Massachusetts. Burton lived on 439 Downer Place in Aurora, just two doors from my father's childhood home, and the author would autograph the Bob's Hill books that Dad would bring him.

But before this article gets too nostalgic, a few historical facts should be noted about "Charlie" Burton. His father, Pierce Burton, was born in Vermont in 1834. He was working in Anderson, Indiana when his son Charles was born on March 7, 1862. Soon afterwards, Mrs. Burton's health failed and she and Charlie went to live with her mother in Adams, Massachusetts. His mother died shortly afterward, and the small boy, living with Grandma, began the adventures which he would recall many years later through a dozen separate volumes.

In 1866, Pierce Burton went to Demopolis, Alabama to raise cotton. In 1868 he founded a newspaper, the SOUTHERN REPUBLICAN. In 1871, he moved to Aurora, Illinois where he bought a newspaper, the AURORA HERALD, in partnership with local Aurora resident James Shaw. In 1874 Burton married again and brought twelve year old Charlie to Aurora to live.

Upon graduation from high school, Charles went to work for his father. In 1882, Pierce Burton founded the AU-DAILY EXPRESS, and by 1886, Charles Pierce Burton was the editor of it. By 1899 he was the owner of

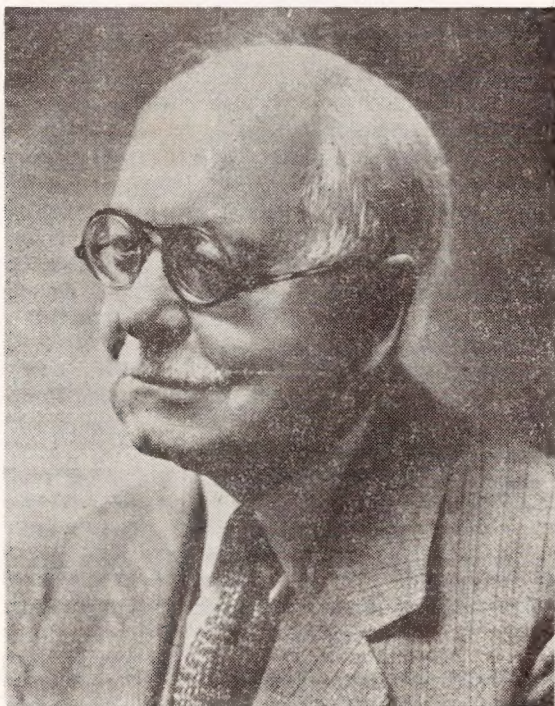
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Charles Pierce Burton

both this and the AURORA HERALD.

Though Burton was well known in Aurora for his newspaper column in the AURORA BEACON-NEWS, he is far more famous for his twelve books in the "Bob's Hill" Series.

Bob's Hill is a real hill in Adams, Massachusetts, and Burton's books record the adventures of "the Band," a group of boys who live in this village. Each story has a certain amount of American history written into it, and teachers across the country lauded the volumes for their educational value. Quoting from an article which appeared in the October 21, 1934 issue of the AURORA BEACON-NEWS, "In a recent questionnaire sent out by Columbia University to schools and libraries requesting information regarding the popularity of juvenile fiction, the reports rated the first four authors as follows: Altsheler, Barber, Burton and Twain."

How did Charles Pierce Burton begin to write this series? Quoting from the above newspaper again, this time from "Another Book by C. P. Burton off the Press" (October 23, 1932), the writer relates, "I have served an apprenticeship in that best of all schools for writers—newspaper work—and naturally was ambitious to see my stuff in book form.

"One day, 25 years ago in the Chicago Press Club, a man was brought to me who wanted to buy a juvenile manuscript for his syndicating bureau. I told him that I did not have any but would write him one, and thereupon wrote THE BOYS OF BOB'S HILL, taking the scenes and inspiration from my early childhood."

It might be appropriate here to mention something about the stories in the Bob's Hill books. They revolve around, as stated earlier, a group of boys





Devil's Cave, near Aurora, Illinois, which played a significant role in the  
**BOB'S HILL BRAVES**

living in Adams, Massachusetts. The character of John Alexander Smith, familiarly known as Pedro by the other boys, was really Burton himself, and he, in the form of the Band's Secretary, wrote the books in the first person.

A quotation from **THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S HILL** can give the **ROUND-UP** reader a clear idea of the characters in these stories, as well as Burton's writing style:

"Perhaps you never heard about the Band; how we found a cave at Peck's Falls, part way up the mountain, and had all kind of fun playing there and on Bob's Hill. There are eight of us in all. Skinny is captain. His folks call him Gabriel but we don't like that name. Skinny is a good name for him, he is so fat. He can run though, even if he is heavy, and you would think that he could fight some if you had seen him once, when the Gingham Ground Gang got after us.

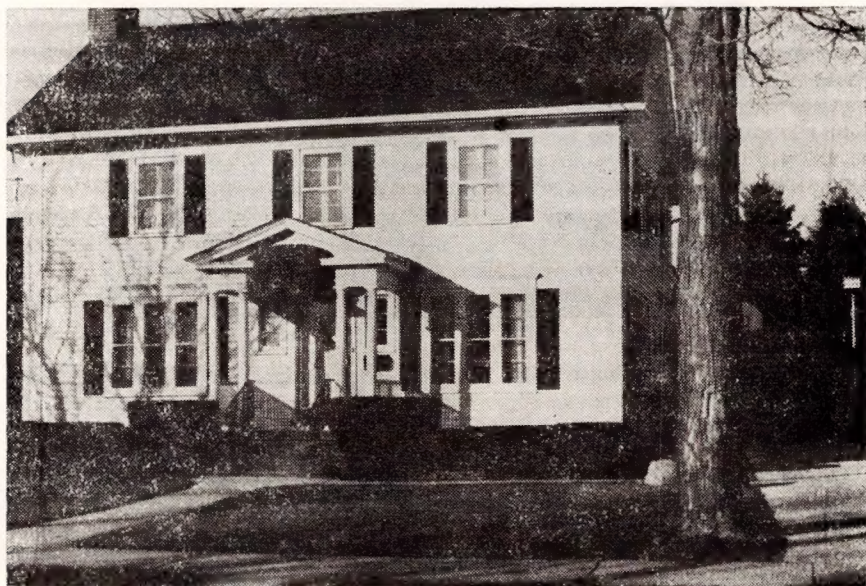
"Benny Wade is the littlest fellow in the bunch, but he feels just as big as anybody and sometimes that is almost as good as being big. Besides these there are Harry, Willie, Chuck, Bill Wilson, Hank Bates—oh yes, I most forgot—and myself.

"My name is John Alexander Smith. The boys call me Pedro, and I have been Secretary ever since Tom Chapin found the cave. It's up to me to write the doings of the Band and the minutes of the meetings.

"Tom Chapin was our first captain and he visits with us now, whenever he is in town."

Although the central theme of the books is simply the fun and good times that the boys have, there is always an underlying element that holds each book together. For example, throughout **THE BOB'S HILL BRAVES**, the members of the Band pretend they are Indians as they camp along the Fox River in Illinois. **THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S HILL** detail the formation of the Raven Patrol. **BOB'S HILL ON THE AIR** tells how the Band learned





Burton's House on Downer Place, Aurora, Ill.

Morse Code and built a ham radio, and how it saved their lives when they were trapped in a cave that was blocked by a rockslide. And **BOB'S HILL BOYS IN VIRGINIA** begins with Scoutmaster Norton informing the Band that some members of Raven Patrol were selected by the Troop Committee to attend the Boy Scout Jamboree in Virginia.

A variety of adventures occur through the many volumes of the series, including fights with the "Gingham Ground Gang," the members of which, like Jerry Todd's Stricker Gang, live on the wrong side of town. There is hiking and camping in the woods (also getting lost there), and in true Boy Scout fashion, rescuing people—from a burning building, a wrecked train, or from the side of a cliff.

Scouting came to be closely associated with Burton's books. In 1935, he addressed the audience at the twenty-fifth anniversary of Boy Scout Troop #3 in Aurora. He made the following remarks which were repeated in the **BEACON-NEWS** of January 29, 1977:

"Until I was almost twelve years old I lived in Adams, Massachusetts. Park Street, where the old home stood, skirts the foot of a large hill which was a favorite playground for us village boys. Sixty years and more ago, that hill was called Bob's Hill because at one time it belonged to Robert Briggs."

Burton said that when he sat down some thirty years later to attempt the writing of a book for boys, "that childhood on Bob's Hill reached up to me through the years and I became a boy again."

He recalled that he had written three books, **THE BOYS OF BOB'S HILL**, **THE BOB'S CAVE BOYS**, and **THE BOB'S HILL BRAVES** when the scouting movement began to attract general attention throughout America.

Burton reported that "Charles H. Norton was teaching a Sunday School class of boys in this church (New England Congregational in Aurora, which sponsored Troop 3 then and still does today) and he had initiated a group of





Grave marker Mr. and Mrs. Burton

these boys into Scouthood. My youngest son, Malcolm, was one of them. He . . . and others became First Class Scouts, members of Raven Patrol, Troop 3."

Burton said that he felt he could help the scouting movement by writing a Boy Scout book. "My first three books had won a wide reading, and a large, ready-made public was waiting for a fourth. It seemed an ideal set-up for some constructive scout work."

So Burton wrote *THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S HILL*. It proved as popular as the previous books in the series. At the church banquet Burton explained how he combined the Bob's Hill Boys with the Raven Patrol, Troop 3, in Aurora:

"There were eight boys (in the other volumes), just the right number for a scout patrol. The previous books had been devoted to outdoor play. All that I had to add was the Boy Scout technique and ideals.

"Skinny Miller, captain of my band of boys, called Skinny because he was so fat, was made patrol leader. The secretary of the Band, Pedro, naturally became scribe of the patrol.

"For Scoutmaster, I lifted Mr. Norton bodily, name and all, from Aurora and set him down in Adams, Massachusetts. I made him out to be a rather lovable and wonderful character in the books, but so he is in real life." (It is interesting to note that "Norton Hall" is now the name of the Scout meeting room at the New England Congregational Church).

Though Charles Pierce Burton's works were based in Adams, Massachusetts, he still did not forget his home in Aurora. *THE BOY SCOUTS OF BOB'S HILL* (1912) is dedicated "To the Raven Patrol, Troop 3 of Aurora, Illinois, Boy Scouts of America." Furthermore, one of his books, *THE BOB'S HILL BRAVES*, tells of the Band's trip to Aurora and the adventures they had there.

Recently I have been trying to get a complete set of Bob's Hill books. Owen Cobb has helped, and Carl Thieme, whom many of us know as the possessor of beautiful boys' books, recently sent me a mint first of *BOB'S HILL BOYS IN THE EVERGLADES*, with dust jacket, a real tough one to find.

I suppose some people in Aurora still remember Charles Pierce Burton. The Two Rivers Council of Boy Scouts of America (in Aurora) has named its highest award for meritorious service the Charles Pierce Burton Award, in honor of the man whose life and writings promoted the virtues on which scouting was based and which it perpetuates. But I can't help but feel that he is not as highly regarded as he should be, for although the last Bob's Hill book was published in 1939, I still think they're the best juvenile series around. I guess Aurora newspaper man Lutz White felt the same when he wrote in "C. P.

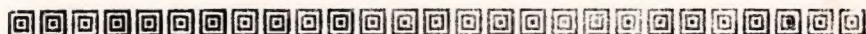
Burton's Latest Book Called Best" (AURORA BEACON-NEWS, September 23, 1928), "There is an ancient aphorism which insists 'a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and in his own home.'

"While this adage is not strictly true, respecting Charles Pierce Burton in Aurora—his home—still there are many of us who do not appreciate to the fullest extent the national fame, prestige and glory of our local author.

"We old timers knew Charlie Burton, the young reporter, hustling news items, small ads, job printing, etc., for his dad's paper, the DAILY EXPRESS; we knew him when he became city editor of that journal and surprised us all with his humorous, philosophical and human 'Facts and Fancies' column; and we remember when his first book of essays was published.

"We knew Charlie Burton when he was as much a fixture on our business streets as the old time lamp posts; and knowing him so intimately we barely realize his high position in his literary field. We scarcely sense the fact that when he visits other cities, especially in the East, he is feted, written about and acclaimed the 'Dad of the Bob's Hill Boys.' It is just the recognition of this common truth that inspired the philosopher to coin the adage above."

Though we book collectors and readers of such publications as the DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP and NEWSBOY pride ourselves on being familiar with many series of old-time books for boys, I suspect that Charles Pierce Burton is not very well known. Here's hoping that this article will spark interest in this superb story writer.



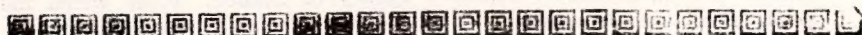
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River Motor Boat Boys, 8 copies (5 good, 3 fair) all for -----	20.00
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## A Time of Lively Fiction

By Robert Sampson

### CHAPTER II

A character achieving series dignity has, by definition, secured unto himself a legion of readers so interested in his adventures that they will pay to secure more. Pleasant for the publisher. Pleasant, also, for the writer, who is eased of that exquisite anguish caused by blank paper and no characters to flame across it.

So it had been from the time of the dime novels. These too were packed with strong lead personalities thundering through weekly intensities. Some few, hotly popular appeared in their own publications: JESSE JAMES STORIES, NICK CARTER WEEKLY, BUFFALO BILL STORIES, OLD SLEUTH WEEKLY.

By the time the single-character dime novels faded, series characters had penetrated the general fiction magazines. There they flowered brightly. Such magazines as THE POPULAR, PEOPLE'S, ALL-STORY, BLUE BOOK, and that specialized delight, DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, were major elements that linked the dime novels with the 1920's pulp magazine explosion. (Refer to Figure 1.)

By 1920, certain specialized classes of heroes had crystallized from the magma of public print.

Consider these selected few:

★ The astute private detective, consistently risking his life, solves problems that hopelessly baffle the police.

**Nick Carter (1886)**—short, having the strength of ten men in a body of steel. His father educated him to become the perfect detective. Expert at gymnastics, sciences, languages. A disguise master, carrying false hair and putty in his pocket for instant changes. Also carried two guns, which he used freely, plus tool kit, handcuffs, a special pick-lock. Moral, upright, honorable. His word inviolable. He radiates integrity and force of personality. Father was murdered. Married once but wife was murdered. Early earned renown, slowly became wealthy through own exertions. Friends from all walks of life. Powerful connections in city, state, national governments. Chief of NYC Police was close personal friend. Was assisted by a legion of aides—young men, women, boys, girls. Adventured widely, all over the earth. Used telephones, automobiles, airplanes, X-rays, motion picture cameras as these were developed. Fought innumerable criminal geniuses, frequently scientists and doctors, none easy, all ferocious.

★ An altruistic secret group, branded public enemies, punish or kill malefactors too powerful or too clever for the Law to touch.

**The Just Men (1905)**—Actually, the Three Just Men, since one died under police guns before the series opened. Manfred is a handsome tall intellectual. Gonzales, a lean, intense Spaniard. Poiccart, probably French, heavy-set, a chemist, a genius. All three, individually wealthy, have pooled their fortunes to support their great work. Which is to strike where the law cannot. To bring justice to men and organizations too powerful to be brought to account. They warn once. Habitually, they kill. For years they were invisible, wanted by police of all countries. Were pardoned. Set up a modest detective agency in London. From which the good, secret work continues.

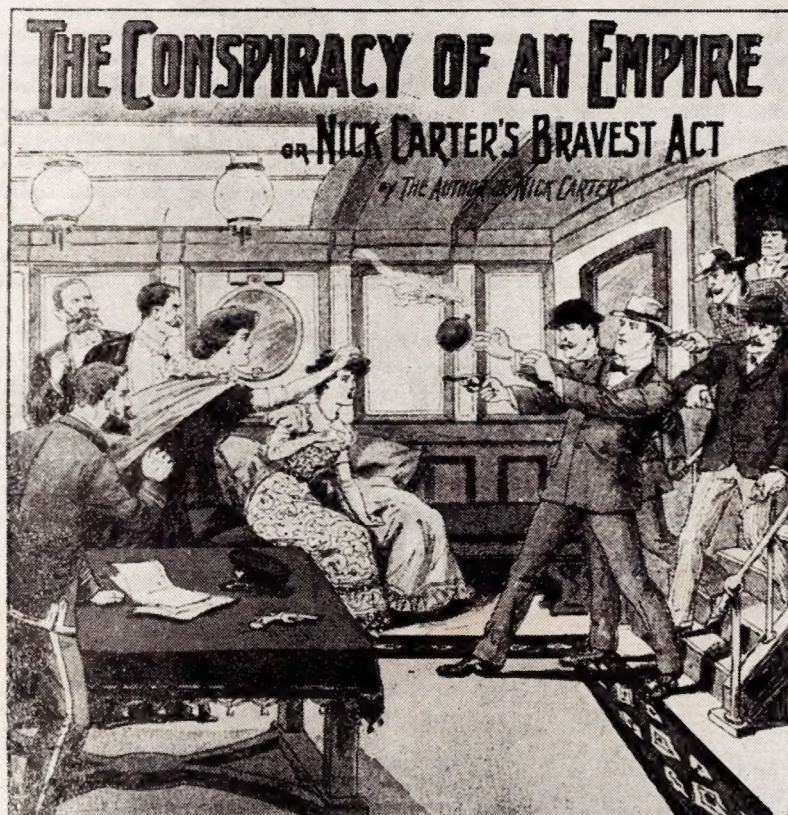


# NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY



No. 423.

Price, Five Cents.



"Never!" cried the woman. "Take that! We die together!" and hurled the bomb straight at Nick Carter's head, but the detective caught the missile, and averted a terrible explosion.

★ A cowboy, supremely fast with the Colt pistol, rights wrongs and punishes the wicked in the Old West.

**Hopalong Cassidy (1907)**—Short, bow-legged, red-headed, dextrous beyond understanding with the Colt .45. At beginning of his career was pranking, jesting, careless, relishing chewing tobacco, whisky, cards. Settled down after marriage. Wife and child died. Afterward became withdrawn, cold, calculating, careful, showing extraordinary tactical ability. Killed dozens and dozens hand-to-hand. Preferred to out-think the en-



emy. From the beginning was part of a close-knit bunch, the Bar 20 men, a loyal collection of eccentrics, gifted men with weapons. Cassidy is warmly loved by friends, dreaded by criminal elements. In later part of life, served as sheriff. In many stories, wanders alone or with a friend, correcting evil by stretching toes up.

★ A wealthy amateur and his friends operate successfully as an unofficial intelligence force against their country's enemies.

**Trevor of the Diplomatic Free-Lances (1910)**—Sir George Trevor is the main character of this very long series. He is American, name unidentified, who adopted George Trevor's identity when that weak cluck died. The new Trevor made a spectacular place for himself in English Intelligence circles. A genius, tall, self possessed, gifted, penetrating. He speaks a variety of languages, has variety of abilities including shooting, codes, music, flying machines. Acts the part of a silly ass Englishman. Has organized an unofficial group of four to eight to battle hostile foreign nationals. In time, Trevor's wealth becomes colossal. He becomes one of the six men to dominate the economy of Western civilization, an insider's insider. Increasingly, he grows autonomous. Maintains his own navy and air force, his own galaxy of secret agents. Although based in England, he acts precisely as a secret state. Always for the benefit of civilization.

★ An amateur investigator unravels contemporary crimes by using advanced scientific equipment.

**Craig Kennedy (1910)**—A tall, austere professor, the American Sherlock Holmes, solves all manner of crimes with —ometers and —graphs. At first, later he solves everything by intuition. His associate, Walter Jameson, is a newspaper man of refined stupidity. Kennedy has friends all over, stands high in society, and the police greatly admire him. They allow him to get all suspects together in his lab, where, after pontifical declamation, he thunders THOU ART THE MAN. Or words close to it. He enjoys more money than any professor before 1910 or since.

★ A strange man, steeped in occult lore, solves innumerable contemporary crimes, and other manifestations of Hell, by means that seem magical.

**Semi-Dual (1912)**—This giant good man, gray eyed, calm, lives atop the Urania Building (city not disclosed) in a white tower surrounded by a garden, in turn surrounded by a practical glass roof. Typical. In the Semi-Dual stories, mysticism and reality blend to Oneness. Dual knows the unknowable, believes in retributive justice, practices telepathy, psychometry, and astrology. In the building below, his close associates, Glace (series narrator) and Bryce practice a rudimentary form of private detecting. Murders, thefts, seductions, blackmail, gangster activity are the meat on which they feed. When Dual touches such sordid subjects, they become struggles between evil and good, sin and virtue. He also fights devil worshippers and knows precisely what's going on without ever being told.

★ An athletic adventurer, skilled in battle, hacks his way to high rank on a distant world.

**John Carter (1912)**—Civil War captain. Tall, powerful, dark haired, handsome. Skilled with horses, weapons, especially swords. Fearless, clear-sighted, brave. Somehow transported to Barsoom, a far-off planet, where his earth-hardened muscles make him a formidable killing machine. Bat-





tled steadily upward through blood slaughter battle peril death. Married the princess, most beautiful. Becomes ultimate high leader of all. His daughter was spoiled rotten.

★ A feral child becomes Lord of the Jungle.

**Tarzan (1912)**—An orphan child, raised by odd African apes, grows to intensely strong manhood. Tall, grey-eyed, of commanding presence, even of commanding presence, even when eating raw antelope. Of English nobility, he at last claims his heritage and his bride, Jane. Retires to Africa, rejecting civilization and its pomps. His son grows up in his father's image. Jane does not die (except in one story, later rewritten), although she is frequently abducted to a fate worse than death. Tarzan



was highly skilled at killing large fierce animals. Finds numerous lost civilizations. Between bouts of amnesia and an unending succession of look-alikes, he has a lively time.

★ A fiendish oriental genius repeatedly strikes for world domination. **Fu Manchu** (1913)—Tall, lean, green eyes blaze hypnotically in Fu Manchu's face of wrinkled evit. He is an incomparable genius, an enormous criminal intellect. At his command are varied hosts of oriental evil—dacoits, Thuggs, other sinister specialists. Also uses scorpions, snakes, poisoned bug, rare drug to numb the will. Fu Manchu' plans, forever on the verge of success, forever fail. Part of the reason is Nayland Smith, who dogs the Chinese fiend. The rest is bad luck. Has a daughter, intensely beautiful, sinister. So are they all.

★ A wealthy young man, who regrets that he played secretly at crime, uses multiple identities to battle criminals in underworld deeps.

**Jimmie Dale, the Gray Seal** (1914)—Tall, strong, handsome, very rich. Once very bored. Created the character of The Gray Seal, a merry safe cracked, breaking and entering for fun. His identity discovered by The Toscin, a mysterious young woman, who henceforth blackmailed him into doing good and aiding the unfortunate. Dale lived double life—a wealthy idler; at same time, a filthy crook on fringes of New York's underworld. Carried gun but was in terror lest he hurt somebody with it. Never quite married the lovely girl but was about to as final novel ended.

★ A costumed criminal genius, commanding hordes of criminals, robs and steals and loots and thieves.

**Black Star** (1916)—Black-hooded and uncanny, this Napoleon of crime controls armies of crooks, all regimented and disciplined and organized melodramatically. His mark is a black star pasted to things. He writes mocking notes. He loots whole towns bare. Yet his immense plans end spoiled by the dapper young wealthy criminologist, Roger Verbeck, and his amusing man, Muggs. Happens constantly.

★ A wealthy young idler fights for justice using a secret identity, strikingly costumed.

**Zorro** (1919)—By day, Don Diego Vega is a weakling lounge, languishing poetically through his rich father's hacienda. By night, he is Zorro, a bold rider in black, who rides, masked, bringing consternation to sinners along California's Mission Trail. The wicked he punishes by whipping or by carving a "Z" into their foreheads or cheeks. Some few he runs through, for he is a faultless genius with the rapier. At end of first novel, the secret identity is revealed and he marries the beautiful girl. She later dies. His identity as Zorro is conveniently forgotten. And the story continues. . .

There are others. The amateur detective, full of curious traits, who sees what the thick-headed police cannot. The reformed criminal, struggling to remain honest and make retribution for the past, although the past nips at his ankles. The unreformed criminal, sometimes humorous, more often deadly serious, whose life is a long succession of unsuccessful coups. The merry adventurer who prances across the world, fighting the good fight every issue. So many.

That similarities exist among these diverse personalities is not surprising. They are, all of them, glorious dreams. Myself as I should be, if only. . . No puny bodies here. No flat wallets. The half-trained mind does not



fumble wistfully among the foothills of culture and education. Wet babies and unwashed dishes do not intrude here. Nor time's tax on hope.

These men are free. Life's rude requirements are suspended for them. The mighty smile at their faces and hasten to do favors. Their women are exquisite, clever, competent. (But it is chancy to be a hero's wife; death lurks whenever circulation drops.)

These men achieve splendidly. They resolve their fictional problem in a way that makes mere reality pallid and plain. For them, the usual social rules do not apply. Their blazing guns are never exhibits at a murder trial; their hurtling automobiles receive no traffic citation; they punch sullen fellows in the nose without law suit.

The heroes live above customary consequences. But they are not really of society. They occupy a privileged position outside. They are guardians, not subjects. They protect society from those terrible dark forces that gnaw it. You can no more expect them to be bound by the common law than you expect Gods to be bound by blue laws.

Nor are these men corrupted by power. They operate from high planes of principle, even handed, uncorruptible. Their worlds are taut with melodrama and movement and their opponents are ever unambiguous. Their adventures are too violent for delicate ethical shadings. Thus they are spared—as the reader is not—the annoyance of performing in a difficult world where right and wrong, good and evil, shade from situation to situation and no man is less than complex.

No such problems assail the series heroes. Their judgments are correct; their actions are justified. Always.

It is easier when the adventure has a beginning and end. Reality differs from fiction in this way: After the final page, reality continues.

Name	Magazine	Date	Type
Nick Carter	New York Weekly	1886	Professional detective
Just Men	Book: The Four Just Men	1905	Justice figures, outside the law
Hopalong Cassidy	Outing Magazine	1907	Quick fun in the Old West
Cleek	Book: The Man of Forty Faces	1910	Reformed criminal on side of law. Disguise master
Diplomatic Free-Lances (Sir Trevor)	Blue Book	1910	Nobility in the intelligence game
Craig Kennedy	Cosmopolitan	1910	Scientific detective
Semi-Dual	Cavalier	1912	Occult detective
John Carter	All-Story	1912	Scientific romance, interplanetary story
Tarzan	All-Story	1912	Superman in jungle
Fu Manchu	Book: The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu	1913	Oriental menace
Jimmie Dale	People's	1914	Dual identity crook gone straight
John Solomon	People's	1915	Adventure with intelligence genius
Black Star	Detective Story	1916	Hooded criminal mastermind
Big Nose Charlie	Detective Story	1917	Humorous crook
Zorro	All-Story	1919	Costumed hero
Peter the Brazen	Argosy	1919	Adventure in Orient
Mr. Chang	Detective Story	1919	Oriental criminal fiend

Figure Table 1—Selected Major Series Characters and Story Types

# THE JAMES BOYS WEEKLY.

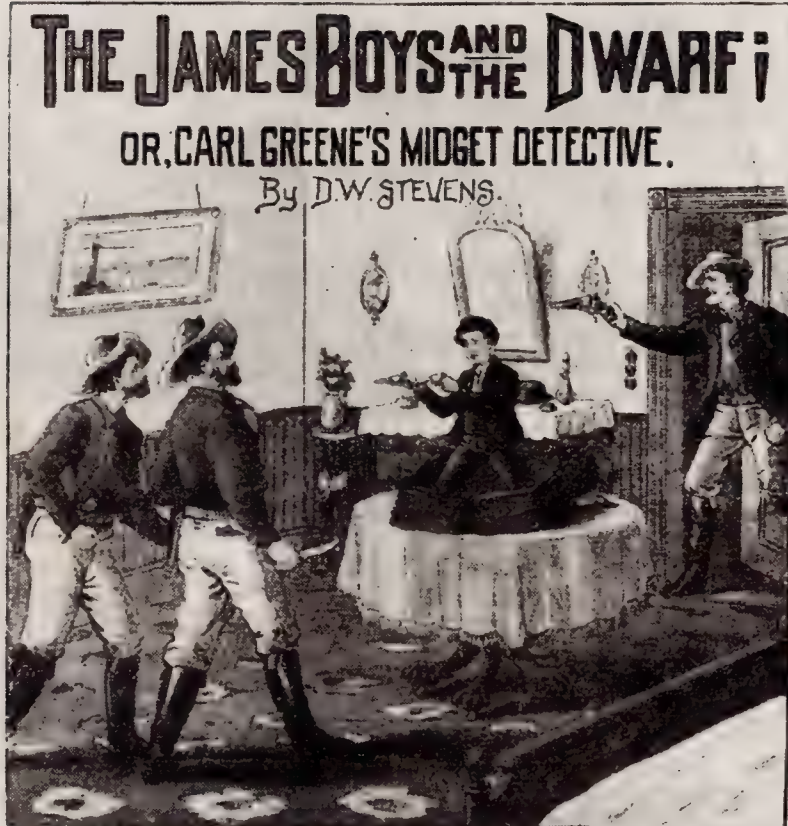
Containing Stories of Adventure.

Published as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, January 24, 1901, by Frank Tenney.

No. 52.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 20, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.



The jaws of the valve fell apart and there started up from it the smallest man they had ever seen. He had a cocked revolver in each hand, which leveling at the James Boys he cried: "Surrender!" Jesse and Frank started back horrified.

## NOTES

David Soibelman has an excellent letter-article in Westwinds on the old Ingersoll Watch. (The December 1979 issue).

Ed Rochette, in a syndicated column (The Los Angeles Times Syndicate) discusses half-dimes as collectors' pieces and compares them to the purchases of dime and half dime novels and libraries issued by Beadle. The column appeared locally on Nov. 11, 1979.



## The Hard-Cover Merriwells

By Harry K. Hudson

Most boys book collectors probably have at least a few hard-cover Merriwells in their collection. Most probably they are McKay editions.

The earlier ones issued by Street & Smith and Federal Book Co. apparently are quite scarce. In almost 30 years of collecting I had never even seen one, until I acquired five titles a few months ago. I do have a color photograph of one which was sent to me by Frank Acker about four years ago.

The first hard-cover Merriwells were issued by Street & Smith as part of their Boys' Own Library. Six Merriwell titles appeared in this catch-all series—Schools, Chums, Foes, Trip West, Down South and Bravery.

I have no idea how many times Street and Smith reissued the Boys' Own Library but the number of variant Merriwell formats is most interesting. In the four Street and Smith copies I have, two slightly different formats are represented:

(1) Standard size, high-quality cloth binding (Type 4, per my bibliography), fairly dark dull or olive green, red lettering on front, gold lettering on spine. Front shows a boy in knickers, sweater and cap with his hands in his pockets, school building in background, enclosed is a small ruled rectangle. Incidentally, it might be noted here that this cover picture is common to all Merriwell editions. The books have four illustrations on coated paper.

(2) Same as (1) except red lettering front and spine and top of pages are gilded.

(3) Per color photo. Same as (1) except building color is a medium blue or perhaps more accurately, blue-gray.

I am indebted to Denis Roger's fine article "The Lovell Complex" (Dime Novel Round-Up, Oct. 1977) for the following comments on the history of the Boys' Own Library. In 1904 Street and Smith sold Boys' Own Library to the Federal Book Co. They issued the series, including the Merriwell titles, for a period slightly less than two years. They apparently printed from the Street and Smith plates throughout. As far as I have been able to ascertain, only the cover (bottom spine) carried the Federal Book Company name. The one Federal Book Co. Merriwell I have is the same as (2) above except that binding is light green and gilding of top pages is omitted. (This is format (4)).

The Federal Book Co. was short-lived. With their collapse, Boys' Own Library reverted to Street and Smith, who promptly sold the rights to David McKay. This was early in 1906. McKay published the series thereafter. They dropped three of the original Street and Smith titles, and added eight new ones. The six Merriwell titles were not affected.

With the passage of time, McKay pulled out some of the groups and issued them as independent series. Presumably, the better selling ones. They added quite a few Merriwell titles to the original six. The Merriwell Series as issued by McKay, eventually numbered twenty-eight volumes.

The McKay formats are:

(5) Same as (1) above, except binding is maroon. This binding is mostly referred to as "maroon," but is more a reddish chocolate brown, which varies somewhat with age and handling. (24 titles only.)

(6) Standard size, cloth binding of slightly lesser quality (Type 1), yellow (varies in hue), black lettering, except author's name which is in red. Frontispiece only, on coated paper. (28 titles.)

(7) Identical to (6) except no frontispiece.

As stated above, I have only one Merriwell published by Federal. It is

possible they issued Merriwells in binding colors other than the green described. I would be interested in hearing from anyone who has variants.

As most readers will know, the Merriwell stories initially appeared in Street and Smith's dime novel series, Tip Top Library (after 45 or so issues, the "Library" was changed to "Weekly"). This publication ran for 850 issues. It was succeeded by New Tip Top Weekly which ran an additional 136 issues, mostly recounting the adventures of Frank Merriwell, Jr. Merriwell stories thereafter appeared in various Street and Smith pulp magazines until as late as 1930. A number of fine articles in the Roundup have documented the Merriwell saga in the dime novels and magazines.

The Merriwell stories were also issued by Street and Smith in various "thick" paperback series—the Medal-New Medal Library, Merriwell Series, Burt L. Standish Library, etc.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Frank Merriwell's Schooldays 1901   | 16. Frank Merriwell's Secret -- 1904   |
| 2. Frank Merriwell's Chums - 1902      | 17. Frank Merriwell's Loyalty -- 1904  |
| 3. Frank Merriwell's Foes --- 1902     | 18. Frank Merriwell's Reward - 1900    |
| 4. Frank Merriwell's Trip West 1902    | 19. Frank Merriwell's Faith --- 1900   |
| 5. Frank Merriwell Down South 1903     | 20. Frank Merriwell's Victories_ 1900  |
| 6. Frank Merriwell's Bravery - 1903    | 21. Frank Merriwell's Power --- 1900   |
| 7. Frank Merriwell Races ---- 1903     | 22. Frank Merriwell's Set-Back 1901    |
| 8. Frank Merriwell's Hunting Tour '03  | 23. Frank Merriwell's False Friend '01 |
| 9. Frank Merriwell at Yale --- 1903    | 24. Frank Merriwell's Brother or, The  |
| 10. Frank Merriwell's Sports Afield    | Greatest Triumph of All --- 1901       |
|  | 25. Frank Merriwell in Camp -- 1904    |
| 11. Frank Merriwell's Courage - 1903   | 26. Frank Merriwell's Vacation - 1898  |
| 12. Frank Merriwell's Daring -- 1903   | 27. Frank Merriwell's Cruise - 1898    |
| 13. Frank Merriwell's Skill ----- 1903 | 28. Frank Merriwell's Lads or, The     |
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311. Gale Research Co., 1332 Third Ave., New York, N. Y. 10021  
312. University of Wyoming Library, Box 3334, University Station, Laramie, Wyo. 82071  
313. David Moulton, 2400 South Glebe Road, Apt. 621, Arlington, Va. 22206  
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376. D. R. Beck, 850 Warren Ave., Eden, N. C. 27288
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378. Fred C. Bose (Hound Dog Press Book Shop), 230 West Ponce de Leon Ave., Decatur, Ga. 30030
379. C. M. James, 720 North Park Ave., Warren, Ohio 44483

There was a net increase of 19 during 1979. Two members died, Max T. Lancot and Joseph N. Petit. 25 dropped for various reasons. If anyone can convince any to once again become members I would appreciate their help. Charles Rothstein, Albert Watkin, E. C. Toewe, Mrs. Dianne Carlin, William F. Black, Dr. Irving F. Leif, Miss Judith Rockefeller, Jay H. Pursel, Jerrold Routh, Baldwin's Book Barn, Pat Farrell, Crager J. Boardman, G. F. Edwards, Bill Luetge, Floyd R. Bolton, Harry E. Mullen, Roy H. Hill, C. B. Williams, Mrs. Lora Barker, Paul F. Steiner, Robert D. Connolly, John P. Estes, Jr., Robert E. Mannors, Dennis F. Nelson, and Ron Taxe. 47 new members were enrolled beginning with No. 332 above.

#### NOTES

Dover Publications of 180 Varrick St., New York, N. Y. 10014 has again published books of interest to the detective story collector:  
**WAS IT MURDER?** by James Hilton — \$3.00.  
**THE PAST**, by Philip MacDonald — \$3.50.



## FIRESIDE SERIES

1. The Light Dragoon; or, The Rancheros of the Poisoned Lance. A Tale of the Battlefield of Mexico, by Harry Hazel. 114 pp.
2. Ida Lee; or, The Child of the Wreck, by Fairfax Balfour. 114 pp.
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10. The Duke's Oath. A Romance of the Eleventh Century. Anonymous
11. The Gold Hunters. Anonymous
12. The Ivory Hunters; or, Yankees in Africa, by C. D. Clark
13. The Wounded Hand; or, The Trials of a Woman. A Tale of the Rebellion, by Dr. A. H. Robinson
14. Wharnccliffe, the Wanderer, by C. D. Clark
15. The Trail of Blood. A Tale of New York, by H. Hazelton
16. The Mystic Sign; or, Plot and Counter-Plot. Anonymous
17. Zoe; or, True or False, by Lillie Devereaux Blake
18. (Title not known)
19. The Flower of the Forest. A Tale of the Backwoods, by Boynton Randolph, M.D. (Edward S. Ellis)
20. The Queen of the Seas. A Tale of Sea and Land, by Capt. C. F. Armstrong
21. Leslie Dare; or, The Secret of Carleton Hall, by R. Armstrong
22. Archie Dale; or, The Actress' Revenge, by Author of "Leslie Dare"
23. Ah-Meek, the Beaver; or, The Copper Hunters of Lake Superior, by William H. Bushnell
24. The Sheridan of Mexico; or, The Fall of Maximillian, by Roderick Armstrong

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## Letters

Dear Ed,

The fact is that up until I learned of the existence of the Dime Novel Round-Up, I had serious doubts about whether I could find enough evidence to justify a Richter grant project about the influence of the Tom Swift series. Now I know I can. Another thing that has helped me quite a bit is the response of Tom Swift collectors to my ads or letters. So far five people have replied and offered to help me; all are members of the Happy Hour Brotherhood: Julius R. Chenu, Owen R. Cobb, John T. Dizer, Jr., George Holmes, and Norman T. Hopper. When my ad appears in the Dime Novel Roundup, I expect I'll hear from a lot more collectors.

Incidentally, I am now trying to track down some dime novels. I need Vol. 8, Nos. 196-207, February 3, 1894-April 21, 1894, of Good News, Street and Smith Publishers, because I want the serial, "Shorthand Tom or the Exploits of a Young Reporter" by Edward Stratemeyer. I also need the reprint in Alger Series, No. 106. I also need Nos. 669-676, November 24, 1900-Jan. 12, 1901, of Golden Hours, N. L. Munro, Publisher, because I want the serial "Holland, the Destroyer or America Against the World," by Hal Harkaway. I also need the reprint, "The Young Naval Captain or the War of all Nations"

by Captain Ralph Bonehill, Thompson and Thomas, 1902. I also need the third printing, "Oscar the Naval Cadet," Donchue. I also need "Tom Swift and His Aerial Warship or the Naval Terror of the Seas, by Victor Appleton, British Am. Bks., 1973. Any help you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely, Thomas E. Phillips, Jr.

40 Tupelo Ave., Naperville, Ill. 60540

Eddie,

You know, old ideas die hard. The other day I picked up for twenty cents in a Salvation Army Store a paperback copy of The Odyssey Press series of Popular American Fiction printed in the mid-60's—this one containing SETH JONES and DEADWOOD DICK ON DECK. The clerk almost refused to sell it to me. He picked it up, scanned its pages, and began telling me that it was "a dirty book." I tried to explain what it really was, but he didn't hear me. He took my money, though, and finally let me leave with the book.

What a world.

Gil O'Gara

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#### ADDRESS CHANGES

111. Andrew Zerbe, 1524 S. 16th St., Apt. D, Birmingham, Ala. 35205  
 289. Robert V. Riordan, 1354 Old Springfield Pike, Zenia, Ohio 45385

#### NEW MEMBERS

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 373. Milwaukee Public Library, Serials Section, 814 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wis. 53233  
 374. J. C. Dykes, Western Books, P. O. Box 38, College Park, Md. 20740  
 375. Toshio Ueno, 5-5-9 Higashikaigan-minami, Chigasaki, Kanagawa, Japan  
 376. D. R. Beck, 850 Warren Ave., Eden, N. C. 27288 (Former Member)  
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(Medal Library), Street and Smith Publishers.

Risen From the Ranks, H. Alger, Jr., Street and Smith Publishers, believed  
1912 or 1913 (Medal Library).

When Life's Roses Bloom, B. M. Clay, Street and Smith Publishers, believed  
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Wedded for Wealth, Lillian R. Drayton, Street and Smith Publishers, 1913.

Frank Merriwell's Lesson, Burt L. Standish, Street and Smith Publishers 1908.

Love Given in Vain, Adelaide Fox Robinson, Street and Smith Publishers, 1912.

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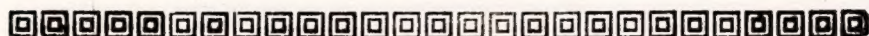
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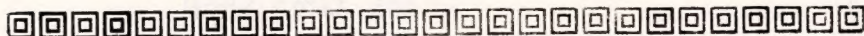
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3. Little White Fox and His Arctic Friends, Ltl Brn 1916
4. An Eskimo Robinson Crusoe, Ltl Brn 1917
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6. Skimmer the Daring, Al Whit 1919
7. Soolook Wildboy, Ltl Brn 1920
8. Told Beneath the Northern Lights, Ltl Brn 1925
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**Thanx, Greg Snell**